The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives news accounts and editorial interpretation of matters affecting labor occurring in the industrial, legislative and judicial fields, and contains other information of benefit to the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

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WHOLE NO. 1606 WILLIAM GREEN, President WASHINGTON, D. C., TUESDAY, JANUARY 20, 1942 GEORGE MEANY, Secretary-Treasurer VOL. 32, NO. 3

FACING the FACTS

With PHILIP PEARL

What new form of skullduggery is John L. Lewis up to now?

That is the question seething in labor circles over the man directly responsible for the split in the American labor movement suddenly popped up with a mysterious peace bid the other day.

Consider the amazing circumstances: It was Lewis who in 1935 founded the CIO by duping a group of dissident labor leaders with chimerical promises. It was Lewis who then instituted open warfare against the American Federation of Labor. It was Lewis who in 1937 vetoed a peace plan agreed upon by committees representing the AFL and the CIO. It was Lewis who in 1939 broke up peace negotiations between new committees appointed at President Roosevelt's request. It was Lewis during that same year who openly declared that he would not be interested in peace until the CIO attained a dominant position. And it was Lewis who ever since has been the one obstacle and stumbling block to renewal of peace negotiations.

It is not surprising, therefore, that when this unprincipled master of duplicity out of a clear sky on Jan. 17 addressed letters to the Presidents of the AFL and CIO urging resumption of peace negotiations, hidden motives were immediately suspected.

Murray Denounces Lewis

Speculations of this sort did not deter the American Federation of Labor from promptly accepting the offer to resume negotiations. We were ready to take Lewis' proposal at its face value. We were willing to believe that his move was an honest response to the call for peace made by the American Federation of Labor only a week after America was forced into war.

Then Philip Murray, CIO President, tossed a bombshell into the proceedings. He revealed that Lewis had acted without consulting anyone in the CIO. He openly denounced the Lewis move as another "Pearl Harbor." He curtly informed Lewis that any steps to resume peace negotiations would have to be initiated by the President of the CIO.

Thus, it became apparent at the outset that Lewis had attempted to double-cross the leaders of his own organization. Mr. Murray's bitterness was so keen that he made the grave mistake of publicly declaring that he regarded labor peace as a "secondary consideration" to certain contract negotiations of a CIO union then in progress. We believe that Mr. Murray will regret that statement when he grows calmer.

But the important point at this moment is this—why should Mr. Murray react in this resentful way? We have much more faith in Mr. Murray's sincerity than in his predecessor's. We have no reason to believe that he fears or dreads labor peace. Why then should he turn on Lewis so savagely after a lifetime of close and confidential association with him?

The Real Purpose

There is one obvious and inescapable answer to this question. Mr. Murray does not trust Lewis. He suspects his motives. He must believe that the real purpose of Lewis's move was to capture control of the entire labor movement.

Mr. Murray's judgment was, perhaps, influenced by the publication of a completely wild and wooly story in the New York Times on Jan. 19. This wholly false story told of a "secret" deal between Lewis and the AFL executive council on a labor peace plan involving a new slate of officers for a reunited labor movement.

President William Green and members of the Executive Council promptly scotched this ridiculous report. There has been no deal with Lewis by the American Federation of Labor, secret or otherwise. There has been no agreement with him on any peace proposal or slate of officers. The American Federation of Labor's officers have not consulted with Lewis directly or through intermediaries. They trust him no less than Mr. Murray does. They wouldn't touch him with a ten-foot pole.

The net effect of the Lewis peace bid thus is to make the task of achieving peace doubly more difficult. There is less hope of success, peace negotiations must be initiated in an atmosphere of mutual good-will and trust. We have thought, and said in these columns, that since Americans entered the war AFL and CIO leaders had learned to trust each other more than ever before. A feeling of friendliness and a recognition of common interests seemed to be growing.

Now comes Mr. Lewis and tosses these constructive gains out the window. As usual, he has created suspicion and distrust. As usual, he has played the role of the wrecker.

The American Federation of Labor hopes that despite the unfortunate intervention of Lewis peace negotiations may soon be resumed. The AFL peace committee stands ready to meet with the CIO committee as soon as it is given the opportunity to do so. The CIO Executive Board will meet in a few days to decide the policy of that organization. Let us hope, in the interests of American, that they will be big enough to ignore Lewis and agree to resume negotiations.

Green Asks AFL Members To Buy Billion Dollars In Defense Bonds

Starts Nation-Wide Drive To Float Huge Labor Loan To Nation.

Washington, D. C.—President William Green announced that the American Federation of Labor has set a billion-dollar quota for purchase of defense bonds by its five million members and all affiliated unions during the coming year.

An integrated drive to get every American Federation of Labor worker to invest in defense bonds will be inaugurated on Feb. 22, Washington's Birthday, with a joint radio appeal by Mr. Green and Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau. This broadcast will be carried from coast to coast by the Blue Network from 8 to 8:30 P. M., E. S. T.

The following week, beginning Feb. 23, will be designated as "Labor Invests in Victory Week" and mass meetings will be held by central labor unions of the AFL in 802 cities throughout the nation to rally the support of AFL workers behind the drive.

"The American Federation of Labor is glad to enlist its entire organization in this patriotic cause," Mr. Green said. "We urge every worker who can do so to agree to set aside part of his weekly earnings for the purchase of defense bonds.

"In this way our Government will be assured of a regular and continuous flow of funds with which to pay for the giant victory production program which President Roosevelt has blueprinted for the winning of the war.

"In this way, the members of the American Federation of Labor can place their savings in the safest investment in the world—the United States of America—and assure themselves of reserve funds after the war is over when employment opportunities may be scarce.

"In this way, our loyal army of workers can back up the armed forces of our nation in a tangible way by helping to provide the equipment our soldiers and sailors and marines sorely need. By way of illustration, the one billion dollars which we are calling upon the members of the American Federation of Labor to invest in defense bonds during the coming year will buy 4,000 heavy bombers or 12,000 tanks.

"This is a purely voluntary program. The Government does not want to compel any citizen to buy defense bonds. The American Federation of Labor is not attempting to compel any of its members to buy these bonds. We don't think compulsion is necessary in such a case. We believe that the members of the American Federation of Labor will regard this program as an opportunity to buy a stake in America's future. We are confident they will respond in a wholehearted way and make our program a 100 per cent success.

"I am calling upon all national and international unions affiliated with the American Federation of Labor, their local unions, the directly affiliated local unions, the State Federation of Labor and the city central labor unions to render full assistance in this undertaking."

Morgenthau Commends AFL

Washington, D. C.—Secretary Morgenthau commended the American Federation of Labor for "setting a patriotic example to the nation in pledging purchases of $1,000,000,000 in Defense Bonds by its 5,000,000 members during the coming year."

The AFL pledge, Secretary Morgenthau said, constitutes "the largest goal ever set by a single organization for a single purpose."

"Just as hundreds of members of the AFL building trades unions gallantly fought with the Marines at Guam," the Secretary continued, "so are millions of AFL members now joining with other American citizens and investing in Defense Bonds to the limit of their financial ability."

Federal Relief Planned For Those Made Jobless By War Upheaval

Washington, D. C.—A decision, to introduce a bill appropriating $300,000,000 to $600,000,000 to compensate workers temporarily jobless by reason of plant conversion to war industries was reached at a White House conference between President Roosevelt and Federal Social Security leaders. It was stipulated that the workers receiving funds must use them also to learn new war production skills.

The money would supplement State unemployment compensation where it exists, at the rate of 60 per cent of such benefits, and would be payable as wages, up to a maximum of $24 a week.

Paul V. McNutt, Federal Security Administrator, estimated that the unemployment created by the retooling of factories for war work would not last longer, on the average, than six months, and voiced a hope that less time would be needed.

Mr. McNutt said it was necessary for Congress to move rapidly in passing the relief bill to avoid hardship among the 4,000,000 men expected to be made temporarily jobless.

Senator Barkley, the majority leader, estimated that when the war production factories attain full speed they would require 10,000,000 more workers than are now employed in this work.

Mr. Barkley said there was "unanimous feeling among the conferees that the objective sought should be obtained," but that so far there had been no agreement over the language of the bill.

He said that the President would tell his views on the plan to the Senate and House early next week, probably in a letter making a closer estimate of the amount of money needed to make it effective.

Labor Wins Safeguard For Workers Against Fake Disloyalty Charges

Washington, D. C.—Attempts by anti-labor bosses to oust active union leaders on the charge they are "disloyal," were curbed under machinery agreed upon by the army and navy, after consultation with organized labor.

Army and navy officials have sweeping powers to remove from defense industries workers whose loyalty is questioned, and the ruthless use of this has been exercised without any right of appeal, and complaints arose that some employers were taking advantage of the situation to pin the label of "disloyalty" on unionists they wanted to get rid of.

To stop such abuses, Assistant Secretary of Labor Dean W. Tracy arranged a conference between representatives of the two agencies and of labor, to work out procedures that would be fair to all parties.

As a result of this parley, a plan to safeguard workers from unfair dismissal was worked out, and a memorandum setting it forth was signed by Under-Secretary of War Robert P. Patterson and Assistant Secretary of the Navy Ralph A. Bard. It is to be distributed to local unions, employers and military representatives at defense plants.

Under its provisions, army or navy agents may, after an adequate investigation, ask an employer to drop a suspected employe, but this would be done only after consultation with representatives of both labor and management. In most instances, unions would be given the opportunity to handle the removal themselves and arrange for transfer of suspects to non-defense work.

CIO Squabbles Over Labor Peace; Green Announces AFL Position: "Ready to Meet But No Deals"

President Green's Statement

Washington, D. C.—President William Green issued the following unqualified denial of utterly false newspaper reports on labor peace for the information of the public and members of the American Federation of Labor:

"There is absolutely no truth in the statement published in the New York Times on January 19th that an understanding of any sort has been reached by the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor and officials of the C. I. O. regarding labor peace.

"No peace proposal or slate of officers was agreed upon, formally or informally, by the Executive Council. The subject was not even presented or discussed at any of its sessions.

"The facts are that the Executive Council authorized a committee representing the American Federation of Labor to meet with a committee representing the C. I. O. for the purpose of discussing labor unity and labor peace. No discussion of peace terms took place. The Executive Council conferred upon the committee authority to discuss peace plans, but with the distinct understanding that no peace plan could be adopted until after it had been reported to the Executive Council and approved by said Executive Council.

"When the essence of a news story is clearly false and untrue, confidence in the speculative features of said story is destroyed. A false story is the real cause of labor unity and labor peace through the publication of this story. The report that secret meetings were being held and secret understandings reached will serve to create suspicion and for that reason will handicap those who may participate in labor peace negotiations."

Council Asks U. S. To Permit Sale Of Tires For Food Truck Operation

Washington, D. C.—The Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor asked President Roosevelt, Congress and the OPM to make possible the relaxation of stringent tire priority regulations so that trucks delivering foodstuffs and other necessities of life will be able to continue operating. The Council statement follows:

Labor is doing its full part in retooling American industry for war production and in speeding the output of armaments, military supplies and equipment. In the conversion of industry from civilian to war output, hundreds of our wage earners have lost their jobs, have mortgaged their homes and have gone to new places where war production is concentrated to make their skills and training available where these are most needed and where they count most. Gladly and willingly American workers are making these sacrifices and undergoing privation for the good of their part of the nation. To American workers no sacrifice is too costly and no privation too great if it means a tangible contribution toward victory.

In the meantime, as the great mass-production industries, wage earners are making their contribution as workers and as consumers. In doing so the rightly expect to be accorded the privilege of consultation and participation in the formulation of basic policies governing war production and civilian allocation.

The Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor has made a careful canvass of all factors surrounding the shortage of rubber resulting from the loss of the vital sources of supply of crude rubber in the Far East. We recognize the need for severe restriction in the manufacture and sale of rubber tires and other rubber products for civilian use. We believe, however, that it is in the public interest to modify the present tire rationing regulations to insure unimpaired operation of those services essential to the health and welfare of the people.

The present, almost complete, stoppage on the sale of rubber tires threatens to cause an economic chaos and economy and to disrupt to an enormous degree the lives of millions of people who are making their greatest contribution to the war effort. The order has created a situation so serious that it would seem to necessitate examination of all facts by Congress before the drastic curtailment ordered becomes permanent. The order prohibiting the sale of rubber tires should be suspended in the light of the following facts:

In 1941 our rubber industry processed 775,000 tons of crude rubber—an all-time record. After a decisive conservation policy had been instituted into effect in the summer of 1941, it was possible to accumulate stocks on hand amounting to 600,000 tons by the end of 1941. In addition to this stockpile held by the Rubber Reserve Corporation of RFC and by the trade, approximately 100,000 tons of crude rubber is "afloat," representing the shipping now under way.

In addition there are at least 1,000,000 tons of used rubber available from which approximately 600,000 tons of reclaimed rubber can be derived.

The program of expansion of the synthetic rubber industry announced by the Secretary of Commerce, Jesse Jones, is expected to yield 90,000 tons of rubber by the end of 1942. This $400,000,000 expansion program is designed to provide an output of 400,000 tons of synthetic rubber when all new plants are brought into production.

In 1941 there were 65,000,000 tires on the United States. To sell this unprecedented volume of tires, it was necessary for the trade to supplement current production by reaching into inventory stocks. Although our stocks were augmented new tires amounted to 16,000,000 tires at the end of 1940, at the end of 1941 dealers and manufacturers' inventories held only about 7,600,000 tires. Even without new tire production, the available inventories would make it possible to put new rubber when needed on 1,900,000 automobiles and trucks.

Tires, tank treads and other rubber products for military use is one of the most important requirements of our Army and Air Force. It is authoritatively indicated, however, that there is no immediate danger whatever of a shortage of rubber for military needs. The United States, even at the present time, has enough rubber to meet full military requirements for approximately one and one-half years and will have an even larger supply when the present program of synthetic rubber production and of domestic crude production gets under way.

In view of these facts, the Executive Council urges that prompt steps be taken to modify the present rationing procedure in such a way as to meet the requirements of all vital transportation services including delivery services essential to maintain the health, welfare, as well as unimpaired efficiency and morale of our civilian population.

Our economy is geared up to a large extent to motor transportation. It is impossible, at this time, to say how possible, to maintain uninterrupted operation of our commercial motor transportation on our highways and in our cities. In view of this, we recommend that every consideration be given to granting preference allocations of new tires necessary to maintain unimpaired operation of vehicles used for delivery of foodstuffs and the operation of our essential service industries.

We further recommend that in retreading and recapping of used tires, a system of priorities be put into effect to make retreading and recapping tires available to delivery trucks handling foodstuffs as well as those operating for essential service trades.

The ramifications affecting the civilian economy in this war depends on transportation facilities servicing the vital transportation of civilian life to a sufficient consistent with our military needs. We are a nation on wheels. If it is necessary to completely eliminate the major source of demand for new rubber tires under a system of rationing, let it start with pleasure cars and other civilian vehicles not utilized in the service of essential community needs. It is both possible and necessary, however, that provision be made to maintain our motor highway and delivery transportation in full and safe operation.

STREET CAR UNION BUYS $50,000 DEFENSE BONDS

Chicago, Ill.—Division 241, Amalgamated Association of Street, Electric Railway and Motor Coach Employees of America, unanimously adopted a resolution to purchase with the funds of the Division $50,000 of United States Defense Bonds, in accordance with the recommendation of the executive board.

CIO Leaders In Open Feud As AFL Awaits New Developments

Washington, D. C.—Labor peace hopes boomed suddenly last week but collapsed almost as quickly when President Philip Murray of the CIO accused John L. Lewis of treacherous motives in proposing new parleys.

The rapid-fire sequence of events came in this order:

1—Lewis, in letters to Murray and President William Green of the American Federation of Labor proposed that negotiations be renewed for a settlement of AFL-CIO differences.

2—President Green promptly replied that the AFL peace committee stood ready to meet with a CIO committee as soon as such a conference could be arranged.

3—The New York Times published a completely false story concerning a supposed "secret" agreement entered into by Lewis and the AFL Executive Council.

4—President Green immediately denounced this story as untrue in every particular.

5—Murray revealed that Lewis had not consulted him or other CIO leaders before making the peace offer and declared, after a bitter attack on Lewis, that the CIO would make no decision on resuming negotiations until its Executive Board meets in New York, Jan. 24.

In talking with New York newspapermen, Murray let his anger run away with him to the extent of declaring that so far as he was concerned labor peace "was a secondary consideration." He insisted that he, himself, would have to make the first official move toward reuniting parleys, not Lewis. He referred to the Lewis move as a "blitzkrieg" and a "Pearl Harbor" attack.

This reaction came as a surprise to AFL leaders who had naturally assumed that Lewis had previously consulted with his CIO colleagues before making his peace offer.

From Murray's attitude and from past experiences with Lewis, the AFL leaders quickly surmised that Lewis had some hidden motive in extending the olive branch.

In various quarters opinions were expressed that Lewis had acted either in the hope of gaining control of a reunited labor movement or of ruining the possibility of attaining peace by underhanded methods.

When the Lewis letter first arrived at AFL headquarters, President Green gave out the following statement:

"Our peace committee stands ready to meet with a committee from the CIO at any time."

At the same time, AFL leaders pointed out that Lewis himself had blocked peace conferences of 1937 and 1939 and had been the chief stumbling block to renewal of negotiations since 1938. They also made it clear that the AFL itself, at a special meeting of national and international officers on Dec. 16, 1941, had called upon the CIO to resume negotiations and had expressed the hope "that our call will not be in vain."

It was at this point that the false story in the New York Times threw the first crimp into peace prospects. The story said that Lewis and AFL Vice President Daniel J. Tobin had met secretly and that the AFL Executive Council had agreed on a new slate of officers for a reunited movement.

Tobin promptly branded the story as an "enormous falsehood." He said that he had not had any conferences with Lewis.

President Green and other members of the Executive Council also denied categorically and specifically that the council had ever discussed any such ridiculous plan, let alone agreed to it.

Murray's statement, coming the next day from New York, then exposed the Lewis move as a lone wolf affair without official CIO backing.

As a result, the AFL is now awaiting further developments, particularly the action of the CIO Executive Board.

WAYMEN'S UNION LISTS OVER 112,000 MEMBERS

President E. E. Milliman of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employes announced that the Brotherhood's membership has passed the 112,000 mark, the highest point in nearly 25 years. "At the rate we are gaining it will be no surprise if we hit the 150,000 figure before this year is up," he said.

The recent 10-cent-an-hour wage increase, amounting to an average raise of 20.4 per cent for employes in the Brotherhood's jurisdiction, gained for waymen and other railroad employes have been an important factor in the larger membership, he pointed out.

AFL Unions Agree To Place All Coast Shipyards On 7-Day Week

"Round the Clock" Production Program Voted By Labor, Industry and Government

Washington, D. C. — Shipyards of the Pacific Coast, with 100,000 employes, will work "round the clock" seven days a week on their contracts for the Navy, the Maritime Commission and Great Britain, as their share of America's war effort, under an agreement reached at a conference of representatives of the Federal Government, the Metal Trades Department of the American Federation of Labor and management.

Shipyard contractors and American Federation of Labor union officials from all three shifts a day, and the San Diego voted this full production schedule in response to President Roosevelt's request for a twenty-four-hour day, seven-day week.

The program calls for a six-day week for the workers themselves, with wages amounting to time-and-one-half for overtime exercised on the seventh week. Plans were approved to keep machines busy around the clock, the individual men were working six.

The conferees, in addition to the government spokesmen and California, Oregon and Washington shipbuilders, included John P. Frey, head of the metal trades department of the American Federation of Labor, and sixty business agents and officers of local unions with which the West Coast shipyards have a closed shop agreement.

The Executive Council of the AFL, expressing gratification over the agreement, declared, in an official statement:

"This is labor's constructive answer to President Roosevelt's plea for 24-hour day, seven-days a week victory production.

"The Executive Council believes that similar agreements for full-time production can be installed in many other vital war industries. The American Federation of Labor is willing to do everything in its power to promote such agreements.

"The West Coast shipyard plan calls for a basic 40-hour week with overtime pay for time worked in excess of that figure. The individual workers will be on a six-day week basis with their days off staggered so that a full working crew will be on hand when shifts a day change over a week. These conditions are fully in line with President Roosevelt's program and policy.

"Government employes deserve the same consideration as do workers in private industry. It would be grossly unfair for the Government to set standards for hours of work in industry and then violate those standards with respect to employes in the field service. Yet this is happening today.

"Because of the war, Government employes in almost all departments have been asked to work long hours of overtime. They have cheerfully done so, as all Government employes are anxious to be of service to the nation in its time of need.

"Nevertheless, while legislation exists permitting department heads to pay overtime to Government employes, this is rarely done in many cases. The Executive Council believes this situation should be remedied at once and a law established for the payment of overtime to Government employes in all cases."

Organized Labor Fully Mobilized To Defeat the Axis, Ornburn Says

East St. Louis, Ill.—One hundred per cent mobilization of the millions of members of the American Federation of Labor for the war of the United States against the totalitarian powers was emphasized by Secretary-Treasurer I. M. Ornburn of the A. F. of L. Union Label Trades Department in an address at a banquet given in his honor at the Broadview Hotel by the East St. Louis Central Trades and Labor Unions and broadcast over Station WTMV.

"The American Federation of Labor yields to no organization in its unqualified support of our nation," Mr. Ornburn said. "Members of organized labor have fought and sacrificed for the fundamental principles of liberty that are the foundations of our democratic institutions. Now our country is at war there will be no 'ifs,' 'buts,' 'ands' nor any other reservation. We are all out for total war against the Axis dictatorships."